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1. *Love charms.*

832 584 If a boy has not been successful in his " gangisa ", if he is despised by the girls and has no chance of being accepted, a special rite is performed to help him to find a wife. The Ba-Ronga do not know the love-philter as such, but they have a substitute for it ; the old village cock is put on the lad's head and kept there for a long time ; the cock scratches him with his claws ; he is then allowed to go. The boy will now succeed ; he will be like the cock, who never lacks spouses! (Mboza).

Other charms are used for girls, especially a certain medicine which produces an abundant lather when boiled in water. The physician washes the girl's body with it, after which she will " appear " (a ta boneka) to the eyes of would-be suitors (Tobane).

755 832 584 Should however a girl not find a husband in the lawful way, she has another means at her disposal—marriage by abduction, and thus no one, or hardly any one, remains unmarried amongst the Thongas. Mankhelu, who was a great doctor, treated this " complaint of singleness " with more seriousness! He used his strongest medicines to heal the boy or the girl who was unable to find a partner in life. This is the treatment followed by him. He takes a she-goat, in the case of a boy, a he-goat in that of girl, and anoints it with fat mixed with his precious medicinal powder ; he rubs the animal (hondla) from the mouth to the tail, stretches out all its limbs and kills it. No prayer is offered, but the *psanyi* (the half digested grass which is found in the stomach) is carefully collected. The boy is then called, enters his own hut, spreads a mat on the ground, sits on it quite naked and rubs his whole body with this substance. " A tihorola, a tilurulula " says Mankhelu. He rubs away from himself all his filth. When he has finished, he coughs to call the doctor, who comes and gathers into a pot all the " timhorola," the particles which have fallen on the mat ; he takes a portion of this and squeezes it into a small bag of lizard-skin so as to make a *shitjungulu* or amulet. The sister must come after sunset without any clothing into the boy's

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hut and tie the bag round his neck. What remains of the *timhoroia* will be used to smear the hut. Then all the girls will love him ; or in the case of a girl, she will soon be asked in marriage.

This ceremony is a characteristic *hondlola*, the same which is performed on the weaning day (see page 59) and after any serious disease ; it is a rite of removal of impurity. (Notice the termination ola, ula, ulula in these verbs ; it means generally to undo, to take away).

If the love charms do not obtain the desired result, the angry boy will perhaps try to avenge himself. He will take a fowl, or perhaps only an egg, treat it with special drugs and give it to the girl in order to bewitch her. This kind of witchcraft is called *ku dambikela*. (See the Chapter on Witchcraft, Part VI). The girl will give birth not to a child, but to an animal, a pigeon, or a snake. Or her genitalia will be changed and take the appearance of the male organ. This is one of the causes why eggs and fowls are taboo for girls.

Let us now hear from Tobane the description of the marriage rites amongst the Mpfumo clan. We shall afterwards see how the customs differ in other Ronga and Thonga clans.

II. *Marriage ceremonies of the Mpfumo clan.*

1) The betrothal (Buta).

When a young man has made up his mind to get married, and when he is in possession of the necessary lobola (1) cattle, he starts, one fine day, with two or three of his friends to look for a wife in the villages. He puts on his most brilliant ornaments and his most precious skins. Here they are, arriving in the village

1) *Ku lobola* means to buy in marriage. *Ku lobola* (a factitive derivative of the verb) is said of a father who claims a sum of money from his daughter's suitor. *Lobolo* or *ndjobolo* or *bukosi* (wealth) is the sum paid, the oxen, the hoes, or the pounds sterling. We shall use these words, which are employed in Thonga as well as in Zulu and ought to be adopted as technical ethnographic terms. I use the verb for the act of paying and the noun for the sum itself.

584 square ; they sit down in the shade. They are asked : " What do you want ? " " We have come to see the girls ", they answer bluntly. And the reply is : " All right. Look at them. "

584 Of course the girls do their very best to be as pleasing as
292 possible, as the mother has told them that these are suitors.
361 The suitor is easily known by his special attire, a belt of skins either of leopard or tiger-cat. He goes from one yard to the other, and talks with the cooks, inquiring their names, and looking at them as, with vigourous and graceful movements of the body, they crush the mealies in their mortar. If the seekers find what they want, they return home, if not, they go to the next hamlet. (Let us say here that each village consists of not more than six to twelve huts built in a circle, leaving a central circular place, the shaded " square ", of which the oxen kraal occupies the middle.) (See Part II.)

584 When he is satisfied, the suitor goes home and says to his parents : "So and so pleases me. Go and woo her. (Ku buta)." Then a middle aged man of the village is sent to the parents of the young girl. He is received in the father's hut and, with all the circumlocutions required by etiquette, he discharges his errand. The girl is called and told that the visitor who came the other day has chosen her ; she is asked if she also loves him (or if she wants him... for there is only one word in Ronga to express these two kindred notions, ku randja). " Oh! is it the one who looked thus and so and who wore this and that ? Yes, I consent to accept (to eat) the money out of his hands (ku da bukosi ku yene). " If she does not care for him, she will declare it quite as plainly : the suitor will have to seek elsewhere. It is a fact worth noting that, amongst these so-called savages, a father very seldom obliges his daughter to accept a husband whom she dislikes, except in the case of debt. If the matter is arranged to the satisfaction of all parties the buta (1) or betrothal is concluded and the messenger is feasted, while he, on his part, gives a present (shihlengwe) to the girl's parents of the value of a hoe or ten

(1) *Buta* may be a factitive derivative of the verb *bula*, to speak: to cause somebody to speak, to give an answer.

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584 shillings ; this present " strengthens their bones " (ba tiya marambo) and nothing further remains to be done but to choose the day on which the betrothal visit shall take place. (1)

2) The betrothal visits (Tjekela and koroka).

584 301 This visit (ku ya ku tjekelen) is paid in the following manner. The fiancé chooses his best friend to be his " shangwane " ; the fiancée does the same on her side, and these two " shangwane " must do their best to help them both during the whole of these complicated ceremonies. Then the bridegroom summons, together with his shangwane, three or four other friends of his own age, and a little lad to carry their mats. They go and bathe and put on their finest attire : rich skins, bracelets hung to their belts, horse-hair necklaces with white beads threaded here and there which swing to and fro on neck and breast. Neither do they forget their small shields of skin, which give them a martial appearance without, however, suggesting any thought of war or strife. Before starting they take a good meal cooked at home. In the evening, after sunset, they reach the village of the fiancée. They sit down outside the gate and cough to make known that they have arrived. Then the inhabitants, who were expecting them, come out to meet them and beg them to enter. The visitors make difficulties. They pretend not to wish to do so. The people of the village insist. At last, with apparent reluctance, they advance into the central square. A hut is prepared for them, and they are invited to go and rest there. They begin by refusing. But the young girls take out of their hands their sticks and their miniature shields and carry them into the hut. At last, with a

[293] 584 574

(1) Amongst the Wa-Nyika (a tribe dwelling between the Nyassa and Tanganyika lakes) the betrothal takes place as follows : A female messenger is sent by the suitor's parents to the girl's parents. She brings with her a hoe. The father calls the girl and shows her the tool saying : " This is your hoe ; it comes from so and so." If the girl looks at the hoe with a gloomy expression and leaves the hut slowly, still looking at it, it is a sign that she does not accept the proposal. Should she on the contrary cover her face with her hands and run away without looking at the hoe, she thus declares that she consents to become the wife of the boy. (*Journal de l'Unité des Frères*, January 1926).

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584 574 836 bored air, they enter. Mats are brought and unrolled before them; this is the act of hospitality par excellence. They remain standing as if they had no wish whatever to sit down. The girls entreat them to rest, and finally they consent to accept the hospitality offered them with such insistence.

The parents of the fiancée then come, squat near them and ask news of their home. They answer, and inquire about the health of their hosts. This is the *djungulisana*, the exchange of greetings which always takes place when a visitor is received. Soon however large pots of well prepared food are brought. "No", say the young men. "We have eaten at home, we are not hungry." The same comedy is gone through again; the masters of the place insist, the guests refuse systematically according to the Native laws of civility—or incivility! The night, however, has come; the young men have consented after all to partake of the feast. The old people retire to their huts to sleep; the young girls remain. The custom requires them to spend the whole night with the young men, according to the law of the *shigango* previously spoken of. The bridegroom's shangwane chooses the bride's shangwane and all the other boys choose their girl. But the fiancée hides behind her friends and takes no part in these games.

584 574 In the early morning the young men go to bathe and the girls, their amphoras on their heads, go to fetch water from the lake. On their return they perform another act of hospitality towards their visitors, namely, they throw water down their backs. The boys wash the whole of their bodies, after which the girls anoint them with fat. The day is spent in a pleasant *far niente*. The fiancé and his friends sit in the shade in the square, clad in all their ornaments. They hum songs, they amuse themselves by swaying to and fro as they sit; the little girls keep them company. Meanwhile the elder girls prepare savoury food for them and go to the fields. Towards evening, the visitors ask to see the parents, to take leave of them; but the old people send the following message: "No, you shall not see us. We cannot consent to your going away, we have hardly seen you. Spend another night with us." They must make up their mind to stay a little longer.

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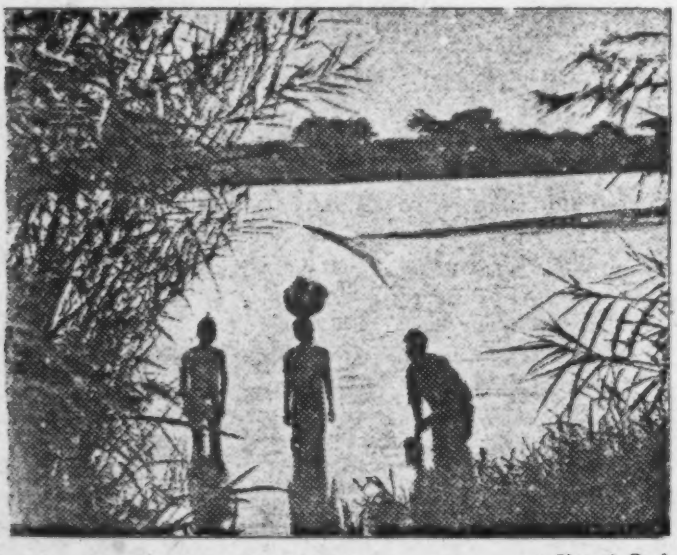
584 In fact this is exactly what the young men want, and the second night is spent like the first.

The third day they go away. All the young girls accompany them along the paths, for a long distance, and, when they part, boys and girls tie together the high standing grasses on the veldt (ku ba mafundju hi byanyi), a touching symbol of their loves! Seeing these knots during the whole season at a crossroads,



Phot. A. Borel

Drawing water from the Maputju river.

passers-by will know that lovers parted there. On taking leave, the young people arrange another meeting. The girls will go after a week or two to return the visit.

292 301 584 In fact, to the *tjekela* of the boys corresponds the *koroka* of the girls. " They make the betrothal visit to see the husband (ba ya ku koroken, ku ya bona nuna) ". They also put on their finest attire ; red and white cloth, in their curled hair a small crown of blue and red beads, looking really pretty, on ankles and wrists bracelets of twisted iron wire.

584 On the appointed day, they go and sit outside the village of
574 the fiancé and cough to announce their presence. The same strange proceedings begin, but this time it is the damsels who make difficulties and the young men must beg and entreat them to enter first the village, then the hut, and then to sit on the mats and to accept food. Each of the groomsmen is most attentive to the girl he chose at the preceding meeting and, to obtain her good will, he generally gives her a fowl or the equivalent in money. In the early morning the visitors rise, go and get water, warm it a little and pour it into basins before the doors of the huts, so that, on that day, the inhabitants of the village will make their ablutions with water fetched by them. Then they go and do feminine work, acting as servants of the fiancé's parents. Thus they remove the ashes from the fire-place and throw them on the ash-heap close by; they cut the wood for the young men's mothers and light the several fires of the village. They pretend to leave when the sun sets, but no one will hear of it, and they must spend another night. At last, on the following day, they go home, accompanied by the young men and again, at parting, knot grasses together. On the day of the *koroka* definite arrangements are made for the wedding.

3) Taboos of the betrothal period.

584 The two families which enter into relation with each other by
574 marriage must observe many taboos (See Part II). Here are some
784 of those which are enforced during the visits of *tjekela* and *koroka*:

262 1) The visitors must not eat all the mealie corn on the spike; they must leave a few grains on it.

2) They must not tear off the leaves which are round the spike. When they have eaten all the corn, they rearrange these leaves in such a way that the cob seems not to have been touched.

3) They must not " make a hole in the pot " (bobota hotjo), viz. they leave a portion of the liquid in the beer pot, they do not empty it entirely.

4) It is forbidden to return home in rain when one has gone

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584 to *tjekela*. You must wait for fine weather, otherwise it is an
574 insult to the future father-in-law.
784 5) If, during the visit, you eat monkey nuts, you must not
262 take off the thin skin which covers the kernel.

6) The suitor—the owner of the oxen—must not eat black fish that day. Only his friends have the right to do so. These fish, a kind of barbel, are to be found in the lakes (as that of Rikatla) and in the Nkomati river. The suitor will not partake of them for fear lest the girl he wishes to marry should slip through his hands like a fish. Moreover this fish is black: it might bring darkness, unhappiness.

7) Neither must he eat honey during his visit, because honey like the black fish, is slippery... Honey flows...

8) He is also forbidden to eat fowls, because cocks and hens scratch the soil with their claws, scattering it about; thus the marriage " might be scattered (hangalasa bukati) before it is ripe ". In the Tembe clans, formerly, any solid food was taboo until the families had killed an ox for the feasts.

These taboos are not the proper taboos of a marginal period, as if the betrothal were considered as one of these periods. They are family taboos, belonging to the category of those dictated by the mutual distrust of two allied families.

585 The wedding feast consists of two parts: the *lobola feast*, viz. all the ceremonies connected with the remittance of the lobolo which takes place at the bride's village, and the *tlhoma*, viz. the bringing the bride to the bridegroom's village. Should the lobolo have been entirely paid at once, these two ceremonies will follow each other without much delay. If the sum of money or the number of oxen is not complete, the *tlhoma* will very probably be postponed.

4) Lobola feast.

a) Preparations.

585 On both sides, the friends are informed that the feast is close
273 at hand. The bride's family in particular must prepare in good time, as they have to provide the beer which will be consumed in

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585 time it is for good! At last! " Ba mu tlhomile! " that is to say : her parents have duly settled her in her home.

In Nondwane this last surprise is spared the bridegroom. The bride comes to his home on the day of the marriage with her two mats, accompanied by a young girl only, and some days later the mother and female relations bring the rest of her trousseau and erect the wood pile. The young bride, when she has definitely accepted her fate and consented to stay, is called *ntlhoñwa* (Ro.) *nhlomi* (Dj.) (the one who has been brought to her husband). During the first week, she will fill all the pots of the people of the village so that when they awake they will find water for their ablutions and say : " We have found a bride ! (He kumi ntlhoñwa!) " ; she will remove all the ashes from the fire-places, and smear all the huts.

The first night when she sleeps in the hut with her husband, she may refuse to allow him his conjugal rights. The bridegroom then goes to his father and asks him what he ought to do under the circumstances. The father says : " Give her sixpence or a shilling. " Then she consents! (Mboza).

III. *Marriage customs in other Ronga clans.*

The description which we have just given may be considered as typical, but there are many variations to be noticed amongst the clans.

584 836 574 In the *Maputju* country, South of Delagoa Bay, there are two informal visits, one of the fiancé, one of the fiancée, to each other's village (ku bona muti). This visit is very short, and they do not accept any food from their hosts. Then the *tjekela* of the boys (the betrothal visit) takes place. They behave in a very dignified manner, do not accept any food the first day and consent to eat on the following day only after having been presented with a gift of 10/ or £ 1! During this visit the girls put 500 reis or sixpence at the bottom of the pots which they fill with water for the ablutions of the boys, otherwise the visitors would say : " The water is too cold. We cannot use it. " Sexual

584 836 574 relations between boys and girls during these visits were not allowed in former times. Nowadays they are indulged in, and it may be that the fiancé will ask his fiancée to give herself to him " to test her love " (ku kamba lirandju). If she refuses, the whole affair may be compromised.

584 574 When the girls go to *tjekela* in their turn, they also observe great formality. Money must be given at least ten times to obtain their consent :

1) They refuse to enter the village.
2) To leave the square and go to the hut.
3) To cross the door of the hut.
4) To sit down on the mats. When the other girls consent, the fiancée remains standing.
5) She consents to sit down when given a shilling.
6) They refuse to answer the greetings.
7) When the others have answered, the fiancée still refuses to do so.
8) They do not consent to give news of their home.
9, 10) They still make difficulties about accepting food.

It may be that the fiancé goes to work in the mines during this period, probably in order to complete his lobolo. When he comes back, a special ceremony is performed which is called *hlomula mutwa*, to remove the thorn. The girls pay him a visit. He sits down amidst his companions, having fixed in his hair a long white thorn made of bone. The shangwane of the fiancée (chief bridesmaid) approaches him, dancing, and removes it. This is a way of saluting him on his return, it means the removal of the fatigue and the sufferings he has undergone, of the thorns which have wounded him.

585 The concluding ceremonies of *thloma* and of the *shigiyane* are also more developed in the Maputju country and in Nondwane.

This is the custom in *Nondwane*. Girls accompany the new bride to the conjugal home. They go to the bush to which she has fled, capture her there, and bring her to her husband with songs of mourning (hi ku djila nwana). " Where are you going ? You go to a husband whose heart is jealous! You will bring a

IV. *Marriage ceremonies in the Northern clans.*

115/584 I have succeeded in getting the whole description of the Nkuna marriage from a very good and clear-headed informant, Simeon Gana. It is somewhat different from that of the Rongas.

584 Here is the resumé (1) of the whole sequence of these rites :

The betrothal visit. (Ku buta). The suitor arrives with his shangwane and an old man who will act as his official representative or go-between (ntjumi). He has already made his choice, and the *ntjumi* at once woos the girl in his name. Her father calls her apart and asks her if she consents. If she is disposed to say yes, she begs to speak with the boy. She chooses a provisional shangwane. They are both shown into the hut of the girl's mother with their respective shangwane. Let us suppose they come to an understanding ; the suitor announces his success to his ntjumi, who goes to the girl's father and informs him that she has consented. But the father refuses to accept this notification ; he must also choose a ntjumi. This is done the same day. The following day, the two parties meet each in a different hut and the first ntjumi again comes and repeats the whole story, the second ntjumi being present.

Then a long discussion takes place (between the grown up people) as to the lobolo. This discussion is conducted by the two ntjumi, who go constantly from one hut to the other, the one conveying the questions : "How many oxen do you claim, etc", the other going in his turn to give an answer. So the two parties never see each other during this disagreeable debate about money. When they are agreed, the suitor and his friends return home and the ntjumi receives £ 1 for his assistance. There is no other *tjekela* than this. The word tjekela is unknown in Nkuna.

The fiancée's visit. As soon as they have gone, the women of the village begin to prepare pots of beer for the lobola feast. But

(1) I have explained these rites in detail in a novel entitled *Fazana*, published in *La Semaine Littéraire*, Geneva, Nov. & Dec. 1910.

584 before this feast takes place, six days later, the girl and her friends go to the young man's village to return the visit. The fiancée has been warned by her mother to be very cautious, not to accept the proposals of her suitor too readily. Boys and girls enjoy themselves thoroughly. A goat is killed for them, a goat called *the feather* because it is as it were a feather in the fiancée's hair, "a feather in her cap"!

The action of lobola follows immediately. The girls have stayed three days and gone home. Six had elapsed before they came. This makes nine days, just enough for the brewing of the beer. It is prepared in the girl's village. All the suitor's family make for it, driving the herd of cattle, fifteen head strong, which is the lobola money. The sham-fight takes place, some of the invaders, the young ones, going steadily forward, the others, the adults, hiding behind the oxen and urging them on under a shower of blows. Huts are offered to the visitors. One is especially reserved for the great *mukoñwana*, the man who has married the fiancé's sister, and whose oxen are used to buy the bride of the day. He has come to see where *his* oxen go. In the evening the girls choose their *shigango*. The next morning they will fetch water for their ablutions. This is the day when the lobolo is officially remitted by one family to the other. Long discussions take place through the intermediary of the two ntjumi, at the end of which the male relations of the bride leave their hut to inspect the cattle and criticise them, the others endeavouring to emphasise their beauty. Two oxen have been killed for the feast, one brought by the fiancé, another provided by the father of the fiancée. Dancing and singing goes on the whole afternoon; the visitors go home at sunset; the girls accompany them and tie knots of grass where they part.

585 A month after the lobola ceremony a new feast takes place, called *the beer which washes the hoofs of the oxen*. The fiancée, together with the women of the family, (not only the girls), bring pots of beer to the husband's village. They stay outside. When the inhabitants ask them to enter, they run back some distance and only consent on being urged... and so on! The fiancée does not put down the pot she carries until her suitor has brought a

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583 the wife's group, offering a higher bride-price in order to obtain the
591 transfer of the bride to her suitor's home.
176 Now, if this is the history of the evolution of the Bantu marriage (and we shall see later on, in studying the relation of the uterine nephew with his mother's brother, that it is quite probable that it is), we may find, in comparing these two forms of marriage, the explanation of some of the Thonga rites. The position of the wife was certainly much more satisfactory, from her point of view, under the old system. She could remain with her people and her husband had but little power over her, whilst, in the marriage of dominion, she must stay in the village of another group, work for it, and perhaps be ill-treated. Does this fact not account for her flight to the bush or to another village the day before hloma, when the female relatives of the husband go and seize her by force ? She tries to hide herself under a veil, as if she wished not to be recognised; but the husband's aunts remorselessly take it from her, and as she goes to the conjugal dwelling, her friends accompany her, singing songs of mourning. These rites are certainly more readily explained if there was, in a remote past, entirely forgotten by individuals, yet still influencing the mind of the community, another state of things, when the married woman was much freer and more happy.

585 3) We find the explanation of some other ceremonies whe[illegible]e apply to them the theory of the *Rites of passage*. For both bri[illegible] groom and bride, there is in fact passage to a new condition of life. They pass from the position of single to that of married persons. Hence the part taken by their best friends and by the bridesmaids, from whom they are separated by their marriage. For the bride there is passage from one family to another, from one village to another.

I cannot say that I have found distinct *separation* and *marginal* rites, but aggregation rites are numerous. The *aggregation rites* are first of all the common participation in the flesh of the oxen during the feasts. Nothing makes Natives more friendly towards each other than to eat meat together. Then come the building of the wood pile, the girl's acts of civility to the husband's friends during the *tjekela* and the day after the *hloma*. These rites being collective seem to represent the union of the two families. The new wife performs them herself individually during the first week of her marriage.

584 How is it possible to explain the calculated resistance to acts of politeness on the part of both male and female visitors during the betrothal ceremonies, and even later on ? If the girls alone made a difficulty about entering the village, the hut, and sitting down on the

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584 mats, drinking, eating, etc. we should say : This rite is also, on the part of the diminished group, a means of asserting its importance, of saving its dignity. But the boys do the same thing on their visit. They maintain the same disdainful attitude... This certainly arises from the fact that the two social groups look upon each other with some distrust, not yet being fully acquainted, and consequently observing a mutual reserve. But further information and a closer comparative study of Thonga rites enables me to give still another explanation.

561 2/31 The term employed to designate this rite is *kunga*. This verb is of Ngoni (Zulu) origin. Used in a general way, it means to remit a present to a chief who has sent his emissaries to claim it. The chief "*kungisa*" viz. orders to kunga. In its ritual sense, it means to give a present to a person who refuses to do something for ritual reasons. The old Thonga expression is *alula*. This word is the reversive derivative of the verb *ala*, to refuse ; it therefore means to remove the refusal, to overcome it, to cause somebody to yield. The kunga rite is performed on at least five different occasions : 1) for the circumcised boy on the day when he is received into the community of adults (page 93) ; 2) for the girl who has passed through the khomba initiation ; 3) for the boy who has wooed a girl, when he pays his official visit to her and to her family, and for the girl, when she returns the visit with her maids, but especially when she goes to the domicile of her husband and thus enters the married state ; 4) for the first-born child ; 5) for the woman who has lost many children and consequently is in a state of bereavement (bowumba) when she again gives birth to a child. In all these cases, the person concerned passes from one condition to another ; the circumcised from the childish to the adult stage, the suitor and his bride from the unmarried to the married state, the woman who has had her first child from the state of womanhood to that of motherhood and the bereaved woman from the state of bereavement to the normal position of a mother carrying a child on her shoulders. And here we meet with the old Bantu conception of life. This passage, in the evolution of human life, is fraught with danger. The person concerned stands on the defensive. He or she refuses to speak, to look at other people, to enter their village, or, in the case of the newly married girl, to perform her conjugal duty. Those who wish them to accept their new condition must persuade them to do so by giving them presents, generally presents of little importance, a wire bracelet, a small coin, etc. This will remove the danger.

This rite, which might be called a *defensive rite*, is therefore certainly

606 these bukoñwana rules would cause death. Yet they are religiously kept as necessary to ensure normal relations between the two families.

We have already seen the taboos which must be observed during the betrothal period (p. 106). Later on, during the gatherings which take place *before marriage*, other taboos are imposed.

606 802 201 584 784 1. In the discussion concerning the lobola, when oxen are counted, the bridegroom's parents must never offer eight head of cattle, because one of them will be killed for the feast, and so eight means only seven. *Seven* is counted by raising, one after the other, the five fingers of the left hand and the thumb and index-finger of the right. In raising the index-finger, they might point it at the bakoñwana, and this would be a mortal offence. To point at anyone with the index-finger is as bad as bewitching him. It is done only in anger, and all the preceding discussions might be nullified if such an imprudence were committed.

2. Should one of the oxen be frightened by the shouts of joy with which the arrival of the herd is greeted and by the sham-fight of the lobola day, and run away home, it is taboo. The ox has seen that something is wrong and has consequently fled. Even should they succeed in bringing it back, "timpfalo ti tjukile," the conscience (or the diaphragm) has been stirred!

584 825 777 784 3. If one of the oxen has no horns (homu ya mhulu), or only abortive horns, psa yila : *bukoñwana byi ta pfumala timpsalu*, viz., the relations with relatives-in-law will have no tenderness, *because such an ox moves its* head to and fro as it wanders in the night ; it is abnormal. The bride's family will not accept it.

4. Should the lobolo consist of hoes, and should the rain fall on them while they are being carried to the bakoñwana, it is taboo. The lobolo must not be brought in a wet condition, otherwise the new relations will be spoilt (bukoñwana byi ta tshipa) ; the young people will not be able to marry.

5. Do not bring with you tobacco in the leaf when going *bukwen* as a fiancé, bring only ground tobacco, or misfortune will happen. Later on, when you have married your wife, it is allowable.

6. Never eat zebra or reedbuck's meat when staying with your parents-in-law. Should they kill one of these animals while

584 you are there, or on the road, have nothing to do with it. The
825 zebra is *mbalamberi*, an animal of two colours; moreover it has no
777 horns. The same holds good for the giraffe. It has two colours,
784 it has too long bowels. Psa yila! The reedbuck cries: "Dzoo." It is a witch: a mukoñwana must not eat it. For the same reason a sheep without horns is never given to bakoñwana.

7. When you go with women to the parents of your fiancée for a *shirwalo*, viz., to bring them beer, should one of the jugs fall to the ground, psa yila! Return home!

606 8. From a Thonga of the Maputju country I once heard that it
609 was a great taboo in that district for a man to drink milk with
784 his parents-in-law; let us say rather to *eat* milk, as Natives
618 always take it in its solid form, i. e. curdled. This man was a
825 Christian; he had given up many heathen customs and had gone
177 so far as to partake of milk with his mother-in-law, but, the people all round were very much shocked at his conduct. Pushing my inquiry further, I heard that the milk taboo was observed not only with bakoñwana, but with all the inhabitants of the country who did not belong to one's clan; curdled milk was to be eaten only with people bearing the same family name. In other words, it is forbidden to eat milk *in any village where one can take a wife*. In a very interesting paper published in the *South African Journal of Science*, 1925, p. 481, Mrs A. W. *Hoernlé* says that this custom is wide-spread amongst many Bantu tribes of Central and South Africa, and explains it by the very intimate relationship which is thought to exist between human beings and cattle. The oxen are one with the clan to which they belong, and only members of that clan can partake of the milk of their cows. I never met with this idea in the other parts of the Thonga tribe, and I may remark that, as the Maputju clan is settled very near to the Zulus and has been more or less "zuluised", this custom might very well have been borrowed from its neighbours. Further researches will show whether the other Thonga clans have preserved what seems to be a very old Bantu idea, or at any rate traces of it. This is quite possible.

584 9. Do not build a hut for your wife before you have married
777 her. Mankhelu says: "Even if you have plenty of money
784 as lobola, if you make such a blunder your wife will be taken from you.

643 It is worthy of notice that no sacrifice is offered on this day, neither is any religious ceremony whatsoever performed. The coronation appears to be a purely military affair, a sort of oath of loyalty taken by the people to their chief and by the chief to his people.

C. THE OFFICIAL MARRIAGE OF THE CHIEF.

643 584 The chief being duly installed, the next thing to do is to provide him with his officially recognised wife, *the wife of the country*, she who is to become the mother of the future king. This wife must be bought with the pennies of the people : a characteristic custom demonstrating forcibly to how great an extent the royal family is at once the property and the pride of the nation.

643 584 521 One fine day, says Tobane, when the counsellors go to visit the new chief, they meet with a very cold reception : "Who do you suppose is going to feed you ? Who will cook the meat ? Who is going to brew the beer ?" They return quite crestfallen, but having perfectly understood the allusion. The chief wishes to remind them that the time has arrived for them to find him a wife. This roundabout way of coming to the point is much in vogue with the Blacks. The matter is at first discussed in secret by the brothers and sisters of the deceased ruler, a family council which holds its conclave "in the hut," i. e. privately. After due consultation, a messenger is dispatched to the principal men of the country, to the heads of the younger branches of the royal family (to Khobo, Pulane, Kupane, if Mpfumo be the clan in question) with the following message : "Has not the moment arrived to set up the chief, to cause him to grow, to increase properly ? For the country is sustained by its cock! (1)" The great ones discuss the affair, each in his own village, and a

643 584 538

(1) *Dyi yima ni nkuku*, a proverbial expression meaning : as the poultry-yard cannot flourish without a cock, so must care be taken of the chief of the country, in order that he may be able to perpetuate the race and secure the succession.

643 584 day is fixed for a visit to the capital where it will be concluded.

Let us consider the procedure in the case of the marriage of Ñwamantibyane, the youthful chief of Mpfumo, who has since been exiled. The following account of the discussion preparatory to the marriage is given on the authority of Tobane, a witness of the proceedings, and will aptly illustrate the etiquette observed on such occasions.

643 584 651 622 The dignitaries are assembled, and one of them, the brother of the deceased chief, commences thus: "Well, you the chiefs of Mpfumo! In truth! If we are assembled here to-day, is it not that we have truly seen that we must, in fact, increase the chief, and give him the wife of the country? This is all the business, you, the chiefs." One of those addressed replies: "In putting the matter before us, hast thou been unequal to the task? (No! understood.) And we, what further words could we add? Nothing remains to be said... You then tell us what we shall have to give you, dwellers in the capital!" Then the secondary chiefs say: "For our part, we will give each one pound sterling or an ox, as you may prefer." The headmen of the villages will each contribute ten shillings and each village one shilling besides. In former times, before the circulation of money in the country, each one gave a hoe.

The secondary chiefs go back to their own districts and get together the money or the oxen as the case may be. This done, the fact is duly notified to the capital and all the contributions are conveyed to the chief. An account is kept of all monies or cattle contributed. When Ñwamantibyane was married the special subscription amounted to thirty pounds sterling and twenty oxen.

643 582 The future queen was chosen from the royal family of Matjolo; her name was Mimalengane. The young chief had only seen her on one occasion, when she was returning from Gaza. Nevertheless she was his first cousin once removed; Hamule, father of Zihlala and grandfather of Ñwamantibyane, married the sister of Malengane, chief of Matjolo, and his daughter was Mimalengane (the prefix *mi* signifies daughter of), who was now

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

643 to become Ñwamantibyane's wife. We have already mentioned
382 the fact that marriages between relatives are sanctioned in the royal families. The chiefs of Mpfumo generally marry into the reigning families of Mabota and Matjolo, and these latter seek their wives at the court of Maputju.

643 All the preliminaries being settled, the purchase money
584 collected, the young girl chosen, Matshibi, the Mpfumo counsellor acting as Agent General for Matjolo, sent Ñwamatshabane, the boy who was his messenger, to Sigaolé, chief of Matjolo, to make the actual proposals for the marriage. The messenger did not address himself directly to the chief, but made his approach through the Matjolo Counsellor in charge of Mpfumo's affairs, whose name was Mambene. The request was made thus : "We have come to ask our *kokwana*, (that is to say our relative on the mother's side, p. 231) in marriage." — "It is well," replied Sigaole, when Mambene had transmitted to him the honourable proposal. — "Go home again, thou shalt come for our reply." A meeting of the members of the Matjolo royal family was then convened, matters discussed, the demand agreed to and the same envoy, attended by a companion, came, as arranged, to receive the reply. The hut was carefully swept and the enquirers renewed their message : "Our chief is still celibate... He sleeps in his bachelor's quarters" (This was not true, as he had already several wives, but they did not count!) "He is anxious to get married. Make haste to give him Mimalengane." — "It is well," said the others, "on one of these days we will go and discuss the affair at your place. When will you expect us ?"

A day is fixed and the great ones of Matjolo go to see Ñwamantibyane. A gorgeous reception has been prepared for them : an ox has been killed in their honour, but they are at first treated in a niggardly manner, and are given very short commons for breakfast ; for, before anything else can be done, the tiresome money question must be settled.

In the large hut all these important personages take their places with some constraint... The suitor is not present. The real business of the purchase money is not immediately referred to ; endless compliments, all sorts of circumlocutions are indulged

643 584 545 in, of which the following is a resumé. One of the chief men of Matjolo commences by saying :

"It is quite right that you of Mpfumu have desired to renew today the old ties of relationship... Hamule your grandfather took his wife from Matjolo. Well! we are obliged to you. Nevertheless Sigaole has sent us to enquire how you intend to make payment for her ?"

— "We have thirty pounds sterling" reply the representatives of Mpfumo.

— "Ah! Thirty pounds ? That means that Mimalengane will have to chop her own wood and draw her own water ?" (That is to say: Thirty pounds suffice for the princess... but payment must also be made for two girls, the younger sisters (tinhlampsa), who must accompany her, to help her in the household duties, as is customary.)

— "We will ask Nwamantibyane what he has to say to this" continues the headman of Mpfumo.

— "How about those twenty oxen ?" says the chief to his representatives, when the matter is put before him. The envoy returns to the hut and announces : "There are also twenty oxen!"

— "It is well," say the men of Matjolo, "that will do for two girls to help in the work of the household."

643 584 261 Thus this delicate business is transacted without any great difficulty. The feasting then begins in earnest. All eat until they *shura*, that is until satiated, the stomach protruding in a gentle curve beneath the sternum, which is the black man's idea of a thoroughly satisfactory meal!

The betrothal being duly arranged, there still remain the betrothal visits to be paid and the wedding to be celebrated. Strange to say the chief, in these ceremonies, is conspicuous by his absence! His male friends alone go to see the betrothed, mainly with a view to reporting on her appearance, etc., to their royal master. Moreover when a chief is concerned, the betrothal visit of the suitor's friends is not returned by the girls, as in the case of ordinary mortals.

643 586 The marriage feast takes place, of course, at the bride's home. In Matjolo quantities of beer have been prepared, and the people

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during the whole of the first year of married life. The chief, immediately on the home-coming of his bride, calls together his young men, who rapidly build for him a new village, his village, which will henceforth become the capital of the country and will be given a distinctive name.

Nwamantibyane's royal kraal was known as Hlanzini, and he had chosen a site for it on the confines of the Nwamba country in order to avoid a too close proximity to the Portuguese Commandant living at Hangwana.

Crowned, married, installed in his new residence, the chief has now nothing to do but reign.

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Mankhelu relates the proceedings of the official marriage amongst the Ba-Nkuna in the following manner : — All the principal headmen send an ox to the capital, assemble there, kill one of the oxen, eat it and discuss who shall be the "wife of the country (1)." They ask the chief : "Whom do you love ?" He answers : "The daughter of such and such a chief." They go to the father of this girl and say : "Eat the lobolo and give your daughter to the chief." The man may refuse. Should he consent, the girl will become the wife of the country : "the earth has bought her ;" she will give birth to the future chief.

Should a great number of oxen be provided by the country, those which are in excess of the lobola price will go with the chief and princess to their new village "in order to provide milk for them."

(1) In the case of Muhlaba, Mankhelu himself received the fifteen oxen of the lobolo of the village and kept them for a time. Other subjects had given £ 1, a hoe, a goat, or nothing, if they could not afford to contribute. Nobody refused, but some had nothing to give ! No matter ! In the meantime one of the oxen broke its leg. The mother of Muhlaba said to Mankhelu : "See ! the oxen of the lobolo die. Take a wife for the chief." Muhlaba was consulted and chose a girl from the Makaringe clan. Mankhelu had already taken a wife amongst these people, who were consequently his bakolwana. He went to them with the proposal ; they consented. Then Muhlaba accompanied Mankhelu on a second visit to the Makaringe people, who killed an ox for him and helped him to eat it !

684 VI.) If found guilty, he will have to pay an extra fine of two
782 oxen (1).

584 When the abducted woman is an unmarried girl, the matter
836 is not serious. No trouble is entailed, provided she does not become pregnant. In the latter case, the seducer can say: "Ndji dlele ku dya: I have killed to eat," viz. "I am ready to lobola the girl" (p. 97). If the girl does not consent, the man is free. But if the man does not wish to marry the girl by paying a full lobolo, whilst the girl and her relatives want him to do so, he will have to pay as much as £ 30 and an ox. "He has spoilt his cause!" His own relatives will be arrested and forced to pay. They are responsible for him and will scold him severely. (Mankhelu).

683 643 *Fighting ending in blows.* The wounded man runs to the square of the capital and shows himself. The assailants will have to pay a fine of £ 8, three for the chief and five for the victim, or of two oxen, one for the chief and one for the plaintiff. (Mankhelu).

682 672 *Murder.* A distinction is made between involuntary murder, which is an accident (mhango, Dj.), and a deliberate assassination.

In the case of *involuntary murder*, Mankhelu describes the proceedings as follows:—Should you have killed a man by accident in a hunting trip, for instance, you will try to arrange matters directly with his relatives, if you were good friends; your relatives will give them a girl.. You dare not offer your own daughter, because they may refuse her, on account of their bad feelings! The same objection will not be made if your people provide the girl. They will accompany her with ten hoes and an ox, saying: "This is fat to smear our daughter." The notion which is at the base of this custom is not that a human person is the natural compensation for another human person, but that you give the diminished family a means of making good its loss. In fact as soon as the girl has born a child to the relatives of the deceased, she is free. If these men wish to keep her as their wife, they must

(1) The neighbouring Chopi tribe, on the contrary, leaves the husband to arrange matters as he likes. Formerly he used to kill the adulterer. But cases of adultery are never brought before the chief.

439 563 monopolise the retail trade throughout the country, and the Natives are quite unable to meet this competition ; they have consequently almost entirely given up all their earlier attempts at business transactions! (1)

167 439 A second reason why the trade of former days has almost entirely disappeared is to be found in the *great economic changes* resulting from the fact that Lourenço Marques has become an important seaport, in close relation with the miners of Johannesburg who receive their supplies via Delagoa Bay. Thousands of Natives are employed in discharging the large steamers which arrive by hundreds in the roadstead. At this work a Native can earn fifteen shillings a week or more ; in a short time he has made ample provision for the wants of his family and no longer finds it necessary to go to Bilene, to Zululand or Swaziland to make a living. The women too can make money by selling tomatoes and sweet potatoes to an ever increasing White population. All this is much easier

439 292 765 584 (1) On one occasion, in 1892, I made a list of various articles displayed for sale in and around a Banyan shop, in the district of Mahazule (to the North of Nondwane). This is what Mr. Nala, a Hindu from Goa established for many years amongst the Rongas, offered to the Natives living in the neighbourhood of his primitive store.

Stuffs. These are sold by measurement taken on the individual ; say, by the *shikumba*, length of one arm, or by the *nkumba* or *bemba* (two arms), or by the *peça*, the entire piece, the equivalent of two bemba. The materials most in demand are called ; *tingidao* (white), *mashita* (black with white stripes), *shilandana* (all red), *shinwakana* (red and black), *mempana* (a special red stuff worn as mourning) and *malopa* (a navy blue material still more frenquently worn as mourning). Besides these are *handkerchiefs* (minturu) of various colours, principally red, a large proportion coming from the manufacturers of East Switzerland ; white *blankets (gamponge*, meaning snow), for three or four shillings ; coloured blankets, thicker, varying from five to seven shillings ; towels, called *thawala* (an adaptation of the English word) and even some articles of ready-made clothing such as *djansi* (overcoats) at fifteen shillings! Amongst the stuffs I would more particularly note the *gangisa ntombi*, that is "for use when courting the girls", dark blue with a pattern of white flowers.

439 *Beads.* There are at least a dozen kinds to be found at Nala's ; djiridja (black) mbanda (white), shingazana, shimuzana, nkankana, habo, matshimbarole, bafa, tshambo.

Sundries. Rings, fish-hooks, buttons (masowa), thread, needles, snuff boxes to be worn in the ears (tinhlanga), knives, spoons, balls of string, padlocks (makandjate) with key attached ; little chains, to be hung from the belt, which tinkle when walking ; bracelets (busenga, ten for a shilling) ; wooden spoons, combs, coils of fine iron wire ; skins ; a large trap for catching hyenas or other wild animals ; small brass petroleum lamps ; sardines at sixpence a tin, English biscuits, and last but not least, a cask of German brandy diluted (tempora) with 50% of water! This would now be replaced by three casks of Vinho colonial, one of white wine, one of red wine and one of I do not know what colour!